ance metropolitan views by the addition of selections chosen to illustrate types of regional culture and points of view. The other text, which would be entirely regional and would supplement rather than replace a more general book, would be intended for the students of a certain region only. It could draw from writers old and new that represent the regional traditions; but if an entirely contemporary text should be desired, nowhere in the United States would there be a paucity of material.

Since the personnel of departments of English now includes, more than ever before, creative writers and critics as well as scholars, there is a tendency for English departments to be the nucleus of literary groups who publish magazines and books and thus become the spokesmen of a definite region. Behind such expressions of the regional trend in English departments lies the more general tendency of colleges and universities to adapt themselves anew to their regional environment. Their sociologists, economists, historians, scientists, and engineers are being called on to play an active part in the community to which they belong. The colleges are becoming tue cultural centers, regional but not narrow and parochial, that occupy a healthy relation to their adjacent region and see in it their laboratory, their audience, their judge.

No more ought they to be, as they sometimes have been, "missionary" institutions engaged in the transmission of a distant, external culture to a servile hinterland. We have had enough of such one-way traffic in ideas; we need a two-way system, by which ideas not only come in from afar but go out afar. That is the regional conception of a good American system of education.

Donald Davidson

If you intend to go to work, there is no better place than right where you are; if you do not intend to go to work, you cannot get along anywhere.—Abraham Lincoln.

CALIFORNIA'S DEFENSE OF KINDERGARTENS

Under the leadership of Dr. Elmer H. Staffelbach, director of research of the California Teachers Association, a presentation of the case for kindergarten education in that state has just been published in the January issue of the association's official publication, *The Sierra Educational News.*

THE kindergarten movement had its real beginning in the United States in Boston, in the work of Miss Elizabeth Peabody—who was the sister-in-law of both Nathaniel Hawthorne and Horace Mann—in 1860; was introduced into California in 1876 but not recognized as a part of the program of public education until 1893; grew rapidly in California after 1913 (1900-129 public kindergartens, 4410 pupils; 1910—208 kindergartens, 6515 pupils; 1931—1894 kindergartens, 78,573 pupils); has there depended on local elementary school district taxes for its support, receiving no money from either state or county; cost during 1930-31 a total of $4,642,663 in California, or $108 per pupil in average daily attendance.

Just at present the California kindergarten seems in greater danger than either the elementary school or the high school. It has aleady been abolished in many California communities. In other communities its activities have been curtailed. A change in the state law raising the minimum age limit of kindergarten children from 4½ to 5 years has reduced attendance by thousands. The fact that kindergartens are entirely dependent upon local district support, without either state or county financial aid, leaves this part of the public program of education in an exposed position.

The chief source of danger to kindergarten education, however, lies in the fact that its vital importance in our great program of producing citizens is not generally recognized or appreciated. The present need is to clear up doubts and mistaken ideas about kindergarten education in the public mind.

The kindergarten is not merely a nice, convenient place to send children of preschool age, where they will be out of their parents' way.

The kindergarten is not a "fad" founded on sentimental foolishness.

The kindergarten is not a place where children are allowed to do as they please, to become "spoiled," and to develop habits of wilfulness and idleness.

On the contrary, kindergarten education is based upon the soundest psychological and pedagogical principles. Modern scientific child study has completely justified the kindergarten in its work with children before the 6-year age level.

The kindergarten is a vitally important part of our program of public education. The success of the school with a child above the 6-year age level depends to a very large degree upon the environmental and social experiences of that child before he was 6 years old.

The qualities which make for human happiness and for social welfare—good character, wholesome personality, and the ability to live with other human beings comfortably and safely—have their beginnings in the early years of the child's life. The kindergarten is a place where these qualities are safeguarded and nurtured. The years are long from early childhood to adulthood; yet the fact is accepted by psychologists and psychiatrists that the kindergarten of the present day plays an important part in reducing the number of future inmates in our prisons, almshouses and insane asylums.

The only case that can be stated against the kindergarten is a financial one. It costs the people of California annually about $4,000,000 to provide kindergarten education for approximately 55% of the children between the ages of 5 and 6 years. The movement for further curtailment is in the wrong direction. Our present kindergarten program should be looked upon as a beginning. It is socially imperative that this program be expanded.

The age of kindergarten children should be 4 to 6 years, instead of from 5 to 6 years as is now the case under the revised law. State aid for kindergartens, at least equal to that rendered elementary schools, ought to be provided. Through this state aid, kindergarten opportunities should be made available to most of the thousands of children now denied such opportunities. Along with this expansion of the kindergarten, the nursery school should be recognized as a public responsibility. Its activities need to be extended, and its influence widened.

The problem of producing citizens for a better future is the most serious business of society. Scientific discoveries in the fields of chemistry and physics are not only immediately accepted, but seized upon in the form of inventions to complicate further our material surrounding, while important scientific discoveries in the fields of psychology and human nature remain neglected. Thus we jeopardize our present safety and multiply our future social woes.

It is a matter of clearest wisdom for society to extend its educational influence into the infancy of its citizens.

Of the numerous statements justifying kindergarten education, two are included in this summary of the California defense, both reprinted from the *Sierra Educational News*. Writing on the "Essential Value of the Kindergarten," Evelyn Chasteen, president of the California Kindergarten Primary Association, says:

The aims of kindergarten education are: (1) to ingrain in the nervous system of the child certain habits of right action which will be for the good of the group; (2) to develop certain appreciations which will lead children to respond to the best things in life; (3) to cultivate in children the habit of learning to think for themselves, to judge, and to evaluate; (4) to give children those skills and that knowledge which will make it possible for them to make the next step in their education in such a way as to

enable them to contribute to, and participate in, the group life.

The kindergarten teacher makes a study of the natural interests of children. She evaluates them in the light of their basic needs, and prepares an environment rich in the best materials which stimulates creative expression and purposeful living by carefully balancing child initiative and teacher guidance.

In the progressive school there is a strong emphasis upon the objective of character and upon the developmental procedures which will achieve it. In this the kindergarten offers significant help. The kindergarten teacher knows the value and influence of example—her own and that of the other children—the wise use of approval and disapproval in the setting or breaking of habits. She knows how to allow freedom without license, and how to provide opportunities to solve behavior problems through group discussion and further experimentation.

When the average child comes to the kindergarten, the most significant element in his new environment is the social element. He usually comes from a home where he has had as his associates only adults, or a few older or younger child companions. He now must adjust himself to a larger group of children of his own age. With these he is thrown into constant association. He must learn to co-operate, and he must learn to lead or follow. He is in an environment where he must learn his first lessons of civic and social obligations and opportunities. If he has been petted and humored at home, as is too often the case, he must now learn courtesy and consideration. If he has been subjected and bullied by older associates at home, he may now find a chance for initiative, sympathy, and equality.

In order that the transition from home to the school life may not be too serious a physical readjustment, the kindergarten has recognized the importance of a great deal of free activity and play for the child when he first comes into the school. Beyond this need of activity as an hygienic necessity, the kindergarten recognizes the need of, and provides in a systematic way for, developmental physical education. It is recognized that during this period the child should receive a systematic muscular training as well as hygienic exercises.

In case the child has had no pre-school physical check-up, the kindergarten teacher studies the child as he works and plays, to discover any possible handicap that might cause future trouble, or interruption of the more formal steps in education. With the aid of the school nurse and of the health department, many children are thus saved from lives of impaired health and interrupted school careers. Through the kindergarten parents are aided greatly in understanding their children's needs.

Through the rhythmic plays and games a finer muscular co-ordination is set up. This co-ordination has a close tie-up with writing and other finer muscular skills. The child who skips with rhythmic ease learns to write more easily than the child who has little or no muscular control.

The kindergarten teacher is trained to recognize and provide for the child's natural curiosity and the variety of his natural interests and needs. It is important that the young children have purposes, ideas, and activities around which to think and plan. It is important that they develop good social habits, habits of sharing play things, and habits of sharing turns in "having your own way." The play activities provided by the kindergarten offer natural situations in which to develop these habits.

It has been found that when children go from a good kindergarten to the first grade of a progressive school their records show that they have made a beginning in acquiring such habits as waiting one's turn, respecting the property of others as shown by not appropriating or demolishing it, sharing

toys, play materials, and personal possessions with other children, taking part in cooperative undertakings, obeying the rules of the group, and other habits varying with the individual differences of the group. The children's wholesome participation in these experiences, invariably comes when his physical condition is perfect with no lurking defects to retard his mental and physical spontaneity.

In our progressive schools the kindergarten child carries these constructive habits and appreciations with him to a sympathetic teacher of a first grade, who recognizes and appreciates his talents and limitations and is ready to help him take the next step in abundant living.

Helen Hand Zillgitt, president of the Los Angeles Kindergarten Club, writes of "Kindergarten as a Basis for Social Security:"

Our nation was founded in true freedom with steadfastness to principle and with reliance upon moral courage.

We, the people of the United States, are destined for a high purpose, and can feel no security unless living in accordance with and in fidelity to the high ideals upon which our nation was established. At this present time, it will take the courage of our forefathers to recognize and put into practice the accepted moral living standards.

The school and the home have a great opportunity and a great obligation to fulfil in developing in individuals a responsibility toward one another and toward the society in which we live.

What we want as a nation we must build into the behavior and attitudes of individuals in early childhood, for the way is long and citizens are made, not born.

Wars, international disagreements, and national and state governmental problems, and our personal arguments with neighbors, are not started because we do not know how to read and write, but rather because we have not learned how to get along with our fellow man.

The importance of these early years in establishing attitudes and habits which persist throughout life cannot be over-emphasized.

At this most impressionable period, kindergarten offers to the little child about to embark upon his career of becoming an American citizen, a safe and wholesome environment essential to his normal development.

The machine age has forced thousands of families with their children, out of the country, away from the green fields and growing things into crowded city areas—into a cramped and mechanized existence.

David Starr Jordan once said, "This is not a good world for babies to be born in." While the world has changed, babies are still born with the same basic needs of air, sunshine, green and growing things, and large spaces.

While families are becoming smaller there remains still a fundamental need for growing children to have competition with others very near their own age—to share play-life with other young creatures.

Kindergarten teaches children the fine art of living together happily. The social order of this day is a closely integrated one, and for little children to be satisfactory members of society, they must know how to live constructively with others. Kindergarten provides for rich and poor alike—opportunity for contacts and for developing a sense of social responsibility. Here, in a little democracy of their own creation where problems arise naturally, they learn through first-hand experience this difficult art of social adjustment.

The newcomer to kindergarten thinks largely in terms of self. Regardless of the large number of enraptured listeners, he says, "The bird is singing to me." "The sunshine likes me." "This pansy came out just for me." The beginning child is almost

entirely individualistic. He says, "I want it." "No! Let me do it." "It's mine." Gradually he reaches the point where he says: "Let Jimmie do it—he makes good ones." He learns to subordinate his own wishes for the good of the group and in a considerable measure to work harmoniously at whatever is undertaken by the group. A little girl said of a habit: "It's something you get to doing and can't quit." This truth is recognized by the kindergarten teacher who sees to it that good habits are built.

In one Los Angeles kindergarten, the other day, a little boy set out to paint a large piece of furniture he had built out of discarded apple boxes. He went to the cupboard to get newspapers to spread before painting. Much to his delight he discovered a "funny" paper tucked in with the rest. With evident pleasure he settled himself to enjoy it—started its perusal—paused, and then resolutely folded it up and tucked it away. "But I have work to do," he said. This habit of stick-to-it-iveness being developed at this time will serve him well in years to follow.

We used to have educational values all mixed up with sizes. We gave the best teachers to the biggest children, but now that we realize how lasting are the results of what a child gets before he is 6 years of age, we give to the kindergarten the advantage of the highly trained expert.

She can discover the over-shadowed child whose dominant parents have forced him to resort to resistance until it has become habitual. She is also familiar with the case of the over-protected child, and is an expert at handling the "poor sport" and the "spoiled child."

In kindergarten a child is helped in building ideals. Here he develops friendly attitudes toward his work—those about him and the world in general. Knowledge and information acquired which is appropriate at this age, is chiefly of value in interpreting and in clarifying to him the social order about him and his place in it.

In one kindergarten, in a most unsavory distict, the children came to school with the concept, "Da policeman's da guy what hits you over da head." Through a series of planned experiences with traffic policemen, the police station and one particular school policeman, this attitude was changed, and the officers of the law became "the men who help you safely across the street," "who take care of children who are lost and find their mothers for them; who 'stop runaway horses'; and keep our homes safe."

Growth in the mind of the individual of his sense of social responsibility and interdependence is like a great tree. The roots, the vital part, are made firm in kindergarten. Here, through first-hand experience, in a little democracy on his own level where follower-ship as well as leadership is taught, where good habits and fine attitudes are built, and where he progresses in ability to co-operate with others; to adjust to the right of others; to take responsibility; to let others take responsibility; to become a part of various kinds of groups; to be self-directed in disorganized groups; and to face facts squarely and deal with them adequately—he has practice in these abilities which insure social security.

Our national security rests on our ability to progress safely. We are reminded of a statement of Phillips Brooks:

"The future of the race goes forward on the feet of little children."

We are just completing three of the most disastrous years in educational history. For the first time, a depression has brought serious harm to the schools and has resulted in restriction and even denial of educational opportunity to millions of children.—John K. Norton, Professor of Education, Teachers College, Columbia University.